

a14 ^{sub BH} As used herein, "comprises" and all its grammatical forms specifies the presence of stated features, integers, steps or components, but does not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, components or groups thereof.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked up" version pursuant to 1.121):

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Cancel claims 1-3, 5, 7, 10-14, 16 and 17.

a15 4. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 21, wherein the opening is located within an absorbing area of the article which corresponds to a plan configuration of the absorbent core.

a16 6. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 4, wherein the backing layer has a plurality of the openings substantially at the center of the absorbing area.

a17 8. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 6, wherein the first adhesive means is located within the absorbing area and surrounds the openings.

9. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 21, wherein the first adhesive means is an adhesive.

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15. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 22, wherein the first adhesive means is an adhesive in a striped pattern.

18. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 24, wherein the first adhesive means is an adhesive in a striped pattern.

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19. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 23, wherein the covering sheet comprises a third adhesive means which exhibits an adhesive force to another absorbent article when the absorbent article is applied to the other absorbent article without removing the covering sheet,

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wherein the adhesive force of the third adhesive means to another absorbent article is weaker than the adhesive force of the second adhesive means to the covering sheet.

20. (Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 25, wherein the covering sheet comprises a third adhesive means which exhibits an adhesive force to the other absorbent article when the absorbent article is applied to the other absorbent article without removing the covering sheet,

wherein the adhesive force of the third adhesive means to the other absorbent article is weaker than the adhesive force of the second adhesive means to the covering sheet.

21. (New) An absorbent article for wear inside another absorbent article, comprising:

a liquid-permeable facing layer which faces a wearer in use;

a backing layer which faces the other absorbent article in use, the backing layer being formed of a liquid-impermeable sheet and having at least one opening made therein;

an absorbent core interposed between the facing layer and the backing layer;

first adhesive means disposed on the backing layer;

a liquid-impermeable covering sheet removably attached to the backing layer through the first adhesive means to thereby close the opening; and

second adhesive means disposed on the backing layer, which faces away from the covering sheet which is held in place through the first adhesive means and faces the other absorbent article when in use to thereby exhibit an adhesive force to the surface of the other absorbent article;

wherein when the covering sheet is removed during use, the first adhesive means exhibits an adhesive force to the surface of the another absorbent article.

22. (New) An absorbent article for wear inside another absorbent article, comprising:

a liquid-permeable facing layer which faces a wearer in use;

a liquid-permeable backing layer which faces the another absorbent article in use; an absorbent core interposed between the facing layer and the backing layer;

first and second adhesive means disposed on the backing layer, the second adhesive means being located on both sides of the absorbent article lying opposite one another in a widthwise direction thereof, the first adhesive means being located closer to a center of the absorbent article in the widthwise direction thereof than the second adhesive means; and

a liquid-impermeable covering sheet removably attached to the backing layer through the first and second adhesive means to thereby cover the entire surface of the backing layer, ~~an adhesive force of the second adhesive means to~~ ^{the covering sheet being stronger than an adhesive force of the first adhesive means to the covering sheet;}

wherein when the covering sheet is removed to expose both the first and second adhesive means during use, the first adhesive means exhibits a stronger adhesive force to the other absorbent article than the second adhesive means.

23. (New) The absorbent article of claim 22, wherein the second adhesive means is a hot-melt adhesive.

24. (New) An absorbent article to be worn inside of another absorbent article, comprising:

a liquid-permeable facing layer which faces a wearer during use;
a liquid-permeable backing layer which faces the other absorbent article during use;

an absorbent core interposed between the facing layer and the backing layer;

liquid-impermeable side sheets bonded to both sides of the backing layer lying opposite one another in a widthwise direction of the absorbent article;

first adhesive means disposed on the backing layer;

second adhesive means disposed on the side sheets; and

a liquid-impermeable covering sheet removably attached to the backing layer and the side sheets through the first and second adhesive means to thereby cover an entire surface of the backing layer, an adhesive force of the second adhesive means to the covering sheet being stronger than an adhesive force of the first adhesive means to the covering sheet;

wherein when the covering sheet is removed to expose both the first and second adhesive means during use, the first adhesive means exhibits a stronger adhesive force to the another absorbent article than the second adhesive.

25. (New) The absorbent article of claim 24, wherein the second adhesive means is a hot-melt adhesive.